

Platte Valley Habitat Partnership

February 11, 2013

Meeting Notes

Next Meeting dates: March 12, 1 – 6 pm

Deadline and Meeting for the draft Plan presentation to PVHP is April 23

Flipchart Notes

PVHP Plan to include:

- A time line – a realistic one.
- A monitoring strategy.
- An understanding that the PVHP plan is an umbrella document that guides how projects are planned and funded.
- It provides context.
- Provides information regarding what's been done, and where we go from here ecologically and geographically.
- Includes information regarding when, to whom and how does a landowner apply for funding – this has bearing on how long it will take to get projects on the ground.

Adaptive Management

PVHP needs a (steering) group that continues recommending projects under PVHP for funding – subgroup?

When is the plan updated? Jessica will create a straw man for March meeting.

Have field trips pre and post project implementation by the steering group and others.

Jessica: make list of stakeholder groups.

Need a PVHP working group that recommends projects.

Monitoring Intervals: What should they be?

Post 1 year, post 2 years, post 5 years – BLM

BLM:

Include language that addresses a demonstration site on private land where BLM and other stakeholders can implement and learn about whether there are juniper treatments in riparian areas that benefit mule deer.

Chat allotment needs funding.

Bring PFC

Consider stream health (i.e. macro-invertebrates).

Projects on Private Land:

- Who can do the work? Who are contractors? What quality of work are we expecting?
How are standards established?
- Include design specifications.
- Address Bidding, is this necessary?

USFS is considering mule deer habitat needs in the following projects for inclusion in the PVHP plan:

- Weed control
- Seeding mix for harvest treatments
- Good for services contract expansion with funds- Part of stewardship contracts in the future.
- Current projects.
- Projects that move deer from transition range into summer range.

Writing of Plan

Meeting dates: Deadline for the draft Plan presentation to PVHP is April 23

Next Meeting date: March 12

Chapter 1: Introduction Daryl and Jess

Chapter 2: Collaboration and public process: Jess

Chapter 3: Ryan and Will: Objective 1 on Winter, Summer and Transitional Ranges

Chapter 4: Heather: Private Lands

Chapter 5: Heather and Ryan (BLM and USFS): Public Lands

Chapter 6: March: Other Objectives

Chapter 7: Tom and Heather (Mae, James, Chris): Monitoring Strategy

Jim States and Jeff also available.

Chapter 8: Jess and Daryl: Conclusion

Terry's Notes

Overview of past Planning efforts

- USFS- mostly summer and transitional range
- BLM – primarily transitional range

Overview of Vision, goal and objective language

Plan outline

- Plan needs to reflect PVHP requirements

Heather provided draft plan overview

- Chapter 4 – add fence conversion
- Chapter 4 – ID references to use when fleshing out chapters (resources section)
- Chapter 8 – add criteria for success
- Conservation District will take the lead in mapping private land priority areas with input from landowners
- Monitoring strategy

PVHP Plan (umbrella document)

- ID what has been completed
- Guides how plans are funded
- Provides context

- Establishes monitoring strategy
- Plan provides direction and opportunity without restricting landowners
- The PVHP plan is the vehicle by which the Game and Fish \$500K is administered
- The PVHP plan will use the ratio of \$ leveraged as a measure of success
- The PVHP will identify greatest need for habitat improvement
- How often will the plan be updated?

Chapter 7 – Project development and funding strategies – separate funding sources from project development process

Game and Fish will oversee \$500K

Projects will be reviewed by the PVHP then if the \$500K is leveraged the Game and Fish will review the proposal

Adaptive Management – see flip chart

PVHP will need to be effective longer than the time span influenced by the \$500K

What involvement does the state have as far as \$ exclusive of the Game and Fish \$500K?

WGF Trust Fund and WWNRT will have continued involvement in funding

The hardest scrutiny will be in house (PVHP). If a plan is approved by the PVHP it should have little problem with Game and Fish review.

When can we apply for funding? WE need to get projects on the ground because landowners are losing interest.

WWNRT – March/Sept 1 funding proposal application dates

Are there criteria for who can be a contractor? Can landowners be paid to improve their own property?

Payment for projects is typically awarded after the project is successful completed.

Does PVHP have to put contracts out for bid?

PVHP needs to establish a steering committee to review projects. Committee needs to be representative of the PVHP stakeholders and meeting should be open to all.

Jessica to develop an Adaptive Management review draft plan by March

Establish summer/fall field tours

Keep the bidding process simple. Keep the specifics in the individual project plans.

BLM

Six standards for healthy rangelands

LP/UP watersheds. LP 2003-2013, UP 2004 – 2014

Six past spring burns have been completed.

Three wildfires have been completed.

Six fence conversion projects have been completed.

Sixteen riparian protection (fencing) projects have been completed.

Current priorities:

Burns

Weeds

Allotment infrastructure

Mechanical conifer removal

Fence conversion

The BLM spends \$50K/year for weed control

Future priorities

Thinning

Burns

Weeds

Travel Management. Antler hunter cause significant problems

Pennock grazing infrastructure

Hurdles

Funding

Livestock operator management flexibility

NEPA

BLM project timeline 2-3 years out

Multiple use

Sage grouse. Past BLM projects in sage grouse core will restrict the number of acres of future habitat projects

Juniper removal trepidations

Discussion about the possibility of establishing a juniper treatment demo site rather than a PVHP restriction on juniper treatments.

Water quality. Does PVHP need H2O quality evaluations for projects?

Micro invertebrate assessments rather than water quality assessments

Three years of H2O testing is required to establish a baseline. This is an easy process that can be accomplished by most volunteers. One time water quality testing is not valid.

All habitat plans need to address water quality that is sufficient to revegetate streams and provide water for mule deer.

Forest Service (shrub land)

Provided an overview of past, ongoing and planned shrub land, riparian and aspen treatments.

2-4-D shrubland treatments (9,206 acres) between 1959 and 1981. In most areas you can't see the results of these treatments.

Fire, 4,290 acres of prescribed burns, 4,961 acres of wild fires = 9,251 total

Cook et. al. – Vegetative response to burning

Cheatgrass increased during 2000-2005 drought. 1,000 acres mapped.

Clearcut fertilization

Shrub planting in clearcuts by broadcast seeding didn't work.

Riparian treatments are primarily livestock management.

USFS treats approximately 450 acres of weeds per year

EIS for aerial application of Plateau due out for review in March

Forest Service (Timber)

3,500 acres on timber management since 2000

25,000 acres of ongoing timber projects of which 13,000 acres are hazard tree removal

5,300 acres of projects in the next few years will be through the NEPA process.

Travel management – decommission 500 mostly illegal pioneered routes for a total of 100 miles since 2005.

USFS can trade timber products for services under a Stewardship Contract, which is what the USFS is engaging in.

Draft Plan Writing

Chapter 1 Daryl/Jess

Chapter 2 Jess

Chapter 3 Ryan/Will

Chapter 4 Heather

Chapter 5 Heather/Ryan/BLM/USFS

Chapter 6 March – go through other objectives

Chapter 7 Tom/Heather

Chapter 8 Jess